

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, March 20. 1711.

THE End of every Thing is the beginning, first in the Intention, tho' last in Execution; he that thinks no farther than he sees, will do no more with his Head than he can reach with his Hands. — To talk to rational Creatures, we ought to talk Reason founded upon Nature; if Sense only guides us, then are we Brutes, and no more Men.

These little Reflections I gather from the Monstrous Absurdities that we see every Day thrust upon Mankind, in the present struggles among us in this Age, about our common Affairs — Trade, whether to *France* or to *Africa*; Liberty, whether

Civil or Religious; Government, whether Limited or Absolute; Credit, whether Publick or Private; Parties, whether high or low. — All our People twist their Interests so close in with their Arguments, that we find it very hard to separate them; private Aims are glossed and painted to look like Nature, and stretch'd into Consequences neither Natural or Rational, yet swallow'd with eagerness, and defended with heat, because desir'd for Advantage.

To maintain these wrong Consequences, we bring in our Passions, and when we can no longer maintain our self-Interested Notions, we rail, scold, call Names, make Parties,

Parties, divide, and at last, our Fury Embarking our Hands as well as our Heads, we fall together by the Ears; *From whence come Wars and Fightings among us in the World? Come they not hence?—Interest byassing our Judgments, and unreasonable Passion leaguings in to support that Interest.*

In the smallest Matters, the Method we use is the same; and he that will argue Rationally and Calmly, must engage with the Passions and Fury of those he opposes; for the more they are put to it for Argument, the louder will they Clamour, that Noise may supply the defect.

Pardon me, Gentlemen, if, tho' I point these Reflections at our Party-Strife, I bring them down, even to the Work I am upon in Trade, and even in both those Points I am upon, the *French* and the *African*.

In the Case of the *French* Trade, I am quarrell'd on all Hands for opening a Trade, which they say will Ruin us—The meaning is, it will Ruin those that say so—And therefore they rail; and yet if they would hear me out, I'll prove it shall ruin no Body, no, not the *Portugal* Trade—Nor shall it hurt any Body but the *French* themselves; pray hear the *Man* out, and then your Objections shall be answer'd—*The End, I say, of every Thing is in the Beginning*, and you must look to the end, or you will never begin right.

Whoever thinks, that by opening the *French* Trade, I should mean bringing us back to Trade with *France* upon the same Terms that we Traded with them in 76, and to 86, from the sham Prohibition mention'd before, to the real one; that we should come to Trade with them 850000 *l.* per *Ann.* to our Loss, must think me as Mad as I think him for suggesting it; but If on the contrary I prove, that as we Traded then 850000 *l.* a Year to our Loss, we can Trade now with them 600000 *l.* a Year to our Gain; then I will venture to draw this Consequence. that we are distracted, speaking of our Trading Wits. If we do not Trade with them.

In my last, I began to shew you, whence this difference proceeds, and *ist.* I instance'd

in our falling into their Manufactures by Imitation, some of which by Improvement, and some by needful Prohibition we make so well, that we shall never return to them for the Trade; as *Glass*, *Hats*, and I should have mention'd *Iron Works*, which now they they would come to us for; I come now to add two other Articles, viz. *Paper* and *Wrought Silks*—And tho' I do not say we are compleat in either of these, yet I venture to say this, we are far advanc'd, and we make them, especially our *Broad Silks* and *Paper* so well, that it will for ever be our Interest to keep such Duties upon the *Forreign Import*, as well from other Parts as from *France*, as the Labour and Ingenuity of our own *Peor* may not be discourag'd—The Trade of *Lute-strings* and black *Alamodes* has been an Eminent Instance of this, and be it, that they may not come up to a Perfection in all Parts, yet these Things supply us, and may do so still in the gross, without ever running back to *France*.

I know I shall be answer'd, that all these Things are Trifles, and make no great shew in the Trade; That the *Wine* and *Brandy* is the gross of the Trade, and how will we manage our selves in that?—

This is answer'd effectually by one Article—Keep on your Duties of 52 *l.* per *Tun* upon *Wine*, and *per Tun* upon *Brandy*, and you shall never bring *French* *Wine* or *French* *Brandy* to be the common draught of the Nation; and this is the grand Foundation on which I shall turn the whole Argument, and I shall state it more clearly in my next; I am told by a Gentleman, who I doubt not knows it, that the *French* upon the View of our opening the Trade, have at *Bordeaux* already rais'd their *Wines* from 100 *Crowns* to 300 *Crowns* per *Tun*—Let them go on, I say—The Principle is plain, the dearer the Price, the smaller the Export; for in all Articles of Trade it will ever be a Rule, that *Cheapness of every Thing causes Consumption*; the Advantage of the Trade will lie upon our Trade to them—And while you can keep that Trade open, it is no matter to how small a degree

degree you reduce their Trade to us— And I shall proceed next to state the Respective Proportions, and shall give you a Precedent to walk by, that will not be denied.

To this I subjoin the Case of the Trade to *Africa* as usual; as these two Trades are equally, as I may say, upon the Nation's Anvil, viz. before the *Parliament*, if possible, that they may be hammer'd out to something, which may tend to publick Advantage—— So I think the Opposers of them act with equal Blindness to the General Interest, as to their private Interest, I believe both Sides are penetrating enough.

I hinted in my last at the Ridiculous Application, *I own I think it Ridiculous*, of the *West India* Planters and Merchants Trading to our Colonies, in their Petition to the *Parliament*, against the Trade being settled in a Company—— I have Examined the Odds of a certainty of Supply of *Negroes*, and Limitation of Price, in which the Company have with all their Proposals, join'd a Scheme for their Advantage, against a loose Trade, subject to no Limitations but the Interest of the Merchant—— which Interest is undoubtedly to sell at a good Price—— I need not repeat this, till some Satisfactory Reply be made to it.

But it seems necessary here, before I come to the turn they would vainly put upon *Scotland*, in the Affair, to put these Gentlemen in Mind of a Thing indeed, which few People care to look back to, and that is their own Original; the Parson we say, forgets that ever he was Clerk—— These *West India* Merchants forget their beginning, and how our Settlements in *America* became first Establish'd; if they would look back into the History of the first of Planting *Virginia*, *New England*, *Burmudas*, *Carolina*, and all those Countries, they will find they were all Founded upon Charters, Companies, and exclusive Privileges; they will find, that without them they had never been settled, when settled never maintain'd, when maintain'd never improv'd—— And had been Universally lost to the Nation.

Nay, I'll go farther, Were not our Colonies now Establish'd upon Exclusive Privileges, viz. That no Nation can Trade thither, nor the People there Trade with no Nation but our selves, you could never have maintain'd your Possession.

Nay, farther, the very Neighbourhood of another Nation, viz. The *French* in *Canada* is to this Day a Goad in the side of your Prosperity, has occasion'd frequent Wars and much Bloodshed, and has even endanger'd the Welfare of the Colonies of *New-England* and *New-York*, more than once.

But to go back to Particulars, the Planting of *Virginia*—— The first Attempt there was, as I take it, in the Year 1606, Petty Kings, Perfidious Savages, variety of little Nations, and diversity of Languages, possess'd the Place—— Forts and Castles were the first step the Discoverers took to settle there—— Let any Man read the Story how often they were Supplanted, Distress'd, Massacred, and Defeated—— How they carried on Treaties with the Natives, how often those Treaties were broken; how three Times by the Miseries of the Place, and Treachery of the People, they were reduc'd to Distress, and yet recover'd.

How was it done? A Company Establish'd by *K. James I.* with Exclusive Privileges supported it all, never discourag'd with Losses, with Disasters, they carried it on 12 Year in meer hope of Success—— Private Trade would never have been able to do this, Men under no Obligation to stand to it; would have abandon'd it ten Times instead of three, nor had it ever been brought to Perfection—— I'll bring you to an Example.

When it had grown to a considerable Head, and several handsome Towns built, and the People scatter'd Abroad in separate Trade, unprotected by their Forts and Castles, What was the Consequence?—— The Case is plain, upon a petty disgust, among the Natives, they fell upon the whole Colony the 22d of *March* 1621, and destroy'd almost all; they Murdered near 2000 of the Poor Separate Trading Planters, and in short Ruin'd the whole Colony.

Well,

Well, under this Calamity, what Supported it? — All the Separate Traders were discourag'd and gave it over, only the Company preserv'd their Footing; the Forts and Castles. *St. James Town, Henerico, and Point Comfort*, these were Sanctuaries to the Poor distressed Planters, withstood the Enemy, supplied the Poor People with Food, till the Company in *England* sent farther Strength and Supplies, and then the Planting went forward again.

If it be argued, that this Company dissolved of Course, and laid the Trade open again at last, as it is this Day, and this has made those Plantations Encrease — I answer.

1. It is a Mistake — The Numbers Encreasing, and Strength growing, that petty Towns and Neighbourhoods are able to withstand the Natives, and by frequent Wars those Natives being destroy'd, the Company sold off their Interests and dissolved: But how, 1st. They granted the Lands by Charter to private Persons on certain Considerations, which private Persons they were to Protect and did Protect from

the Natives, till they were out of need of that Protection; 2. They obtained for those private Persons Exclusive Privileges, viz. That no Forreigners should settle on those Coasts.

2. Now let us see the private Traders settle Factories, plant the Land, subdue the Natives, exclude Forreigners, and settle a Hundred Thousand *English* Inhabitants on the Coast of *Africa*, and our Company shall dissolve of Course; Forts and Castles shall be needless, or they shall maintain them themselves, and the Trade shall be as free and as open as they please, for the Question is not who shall have the Trade, but who can preserve and secure the Trade?

Had the Planters and Merchants consider'd this, they could never have had the Heart, I do not say the Face to have appeared in a Petition against Establishing a Trade by the same Method they were Established themselves, and without which, it had been impossible they could ever have been secur'd at all; but I shall speak more Home to this in my next.

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